

NICK CARTER WEEKLY

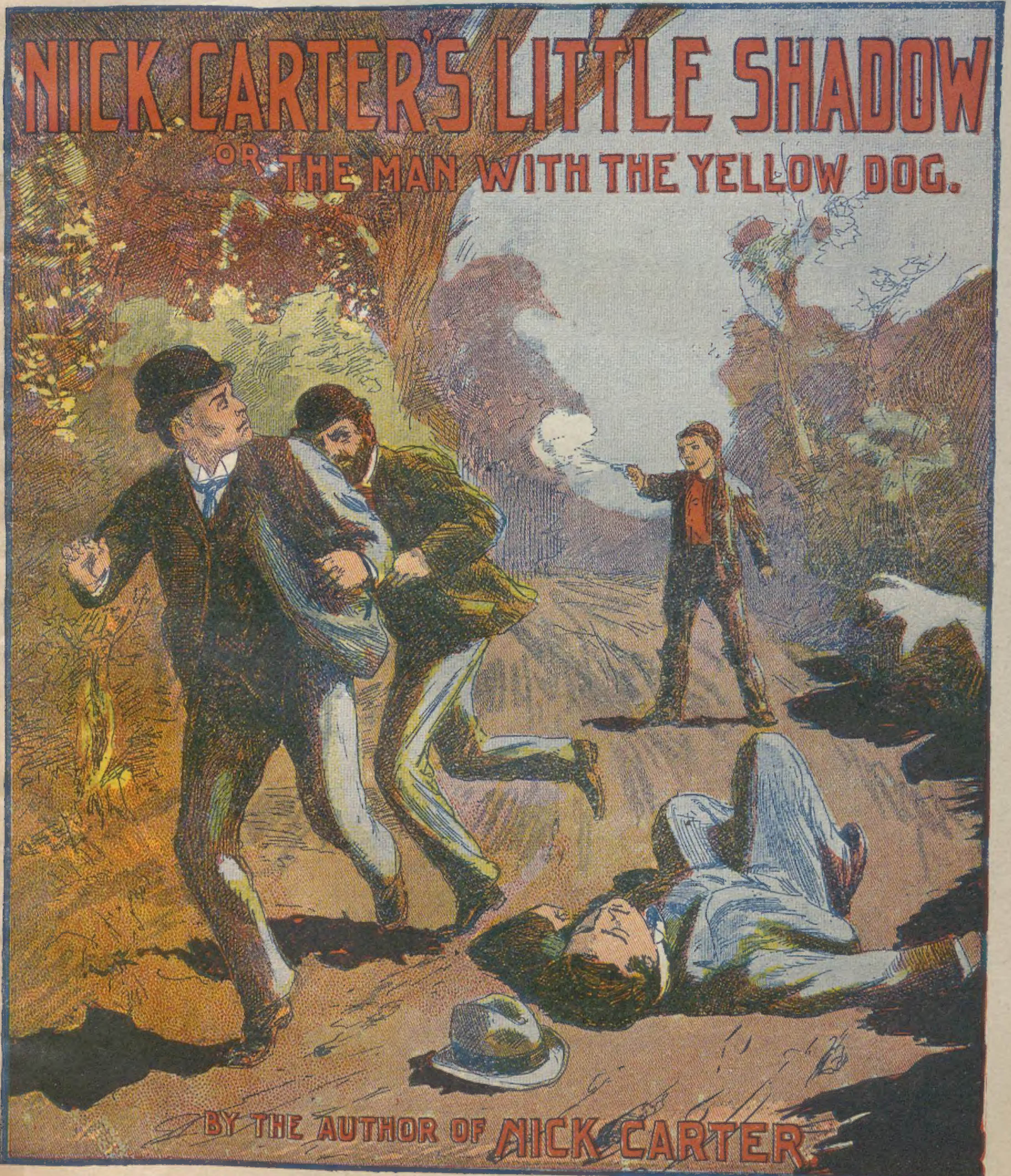
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ONE HALF-PENNY

Price 5 Cents.

NICK CARTER'S LITTLE SHADOW OR THE MAN WITH THE YELLOW DOG.



BY THE AUTHOR OF NICK CARTER.

PROBABLY THE VILLAINS TOOK THE PISTOL SHOTS FIRED BY NICK'S LITTLE SHADOW AS AN ATTACK BY A POSSE OF OFFICERS.

FOUR NEW NUMBERS 1ST OF EVERY MONTH

NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

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Nick Carter's Little Shadow;

OR,

THE MAN WITH THE YELLOW DOG.

By the Author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

A GHASTLY DISCOVERY.

"It is a case of mysterious disappearance, Mr. Carter."

"Who has disappeared?"

"My uncle."

"Jacob Hanson, the millionaire?"

"Yes."

"When was he last seen?"

"One week ago."

"Where?"

"At his residence near Ravenswood."

"Who is living there now?"

"No one."

"Who lived there with him at the time of his disappearance?"

"One William Torrens, the man-of-all-work."

"Where is Torrens?"

"He has disappeared, also."

"What sort of a man was Torrens?"

"As honest a fellow as ever breathed, and wholly devoted to my uncle's interests."

"Had the house been robbed?"

"The furniture and belongings had been turned topsy-turvy, but I cannot find that anything of value was stolen."

"When did you make your investigation?"

"This forenoon, and upon its conclusion, I went to the justice of the peace at Long Island City, and he at once referred me to you."

The great detective looked at the handsome, anxious face of the millionaire's nephew for a moment, and then said:

"Had your uncle any enemies?"

"None that I ever heard of."

"Had he ever been married?"

"No; he was a bachelor, and a sort of hermit. Torrens did all his work, and he rarely left the house."

"In what did his property consist?"

"Ready money, gold or bank notes, or both."

"Banked in the city, I suppose?"

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Perfectly so, for he often declared that he had no faith in banks."

"Where did he put his money, then?"

"I do not know."

"Perhaps it was hidden somewhere about the house or grounds."

"Perhaps."

The young man, whose name was Vincent Orton, spoke so unconcernedly that Nick looked at him in surprise.

"Who are the old man's heirs?" was the great detective's next question.

"Myself and a cousin in England. We both have ample means of our own."

"Here is a mystery indeed," thought Nick. "A rich man, without enemies, having heirs who are wealthy in their own right, disappears, and without an apparent motive."

A few more questions and his catechism was finished.

"Were you on good terms with your uncle?"

"We were on the best of terms."

"How about your English cousin?"

"A nobler fellow never breathed. He was here last fall, and uncle became greatly attached to him."

"What is his name?"

"Cuthbert Orton."

"Married?"

"No, single, like myself."

"I will go over to the house," said Nick, "and do a little investigating on my own account."

"I will accompany you."

"Very well."

The foregoing conversation had taken place in Nick Carter's private office in the early part of the afternoon.

At four o'clock they were in front of the missing millionaire's grounds.

The house, an old-fashioned one, with many gables, stood in a large lot thickly grown with trees and shrubbery.

In one corner was a tiny cottage.

It had been occupied by William Torrens, the man-of-all-work.

Nick first turned his attention to this structure.

The door was locked, but a skeleton key soon opened it.

There were but two rooms, a kitchen and a compound living and bed-room.

Everything in the last-named apartment was neat and clean, and in apple-pie order.

Nick went to a little wardrobe in a corner and inspected it.

There were several suits of clothes, among them one of black, of extra quality and fine make.

"His best," commented Nick.

The great detective looked into Torrens' desk and found the papers and documents appertaining to his own private business and that of his employer arranged methodically, and bearing no appearance of having been disturbed.

In a drawer Nick found a memorandum book.

The last entry was made on the day of his disappearance, which coincided with the disappearance of Jacob Hanson.

It ran thus:

"See Malcom, No. —, Park Row, at ten A. M. to-morrow; and find out about Luther."

Nick made a copy of the memorandum, and then passed into the kitchen.

Here there were evidences that Torrens had been interrupted at his breakfast, for on the table on which he was in the habit of eating were a plate of fried eggs and ham partially consumed, and a cup of coffee that was over half full, while on the stove was the coffee pot and a pan of fritters, the latter badly burned.

On a chair by the window was a beaver hat, almost new.

Nick asked Orton, as he pointed to it:

"Does this belong to Torrens?"

"Yes. Queer that it should be in the kitchen, isn't it?"

"It was probably left there in a hurry."

Nick opened the back door and stepped out into the yard.

It was small, not more than twenty feet square, and was surrounded on three sides by a picket fence.

At the back was a gate, opening into a narrow lane, which intersected the main road.

Nick had hoped to find footprints, but the path, like that in front, was well graveled.

He leaned on the gate with his keen eyes moving hither and thither, when he suddenly uttered an exclamation.

"Found something?" queried Vincent Orton, eagerly.

"Perhaps."

Nick passed out of the gate quickly, and hurrying up the lane a few rods, picked up an article which lay on the side of the graveled roadway.

It was a gentleman's driving glove of a large size.

"That never belonged to Torrens," said Orton, who had followed the great detective, "for his hands were very small."

Nick did not answer the young man.

He was turning the glove over and over in his hand.

Under the thumbs he made a discovery.

Adhering to the leather were three short, yellowish hairs.

"Torrens had black hair, streaked with gray," said Orton, as he looked at Nick's find.

"I knew that," was the quick reply.

"How?" regarding the great detective in surprise.

"Because there were black and gray hairs on the sweatband of the beaver."

Nick removed the three yellowish hairs from the glove, wrapped them in a bit of paper, and put them in his pocket-book.

The two men then returned to the cottage.

After remaining there a short time without making any further discoveries, they started for the missing millionaire's house.

When about half-way there, Nick picked up a cigar stump in the path, smelled of it, removed the wrappers, looked at the filling, and then placed it in his pocket-book along with the hairs.

"What is your opinion?" asked Orton, in some curiosity.

"I will tell you later. Our investigations have not yet been finished."

They entered the house, and before the great detective had completed his examination of a single room, he had come to the conclusion from the disarray of furniture and other evidences, that the author of the disturbance had been searching for some hidden article.

In the millionaire's bed-room, Nick found a secret drawer in the bureau, which interested him greatly.

It was empty, but for a torn bit of writing paper, of a triangular shape, and one ragged edge, which protruded from a crack in a corner.

Withdrawing it, he saw that it contained these words, written in ink with a trembling hand:

"——proof will be found in a small trunk at No. ——, Fulton street, Brooklyn."

It was the conclusion of a sentence, and probably the last on the sheet.

This also went into Nick's book, after the writing had been identified by Orton as that of his uncle.

The room bore no signs of a struggle, though the bed was unmade.

In a closet Nick found a gray tweed suit which had seen but little wear.

"He had but two suits," remarked Orton, "the one he wore about the house and this."

Nick examined all the windows.

Every one was closed and fastened.

"Was the front door locked when you

came here this forenoon?" he asked Orton.

"No."

"Back door?"

"Open, too."

They went down stairs and into the kitchen, the only room not yet examined.

Everything was in order.

Before the stove was a handful of kindling wood.

On a shelf near the stove were a coffee pot, tea caddy, etc.

Nick looked into the two pots.

Clean and dry.

In a few moments they were outside.

"Did you look over the grounds?" asked the detective of his companion.

"No."

Nick was ahead of Orton, and was approaching a rustic summer house a few yards from the kitchen door, when he halted with an ejaculation of surprise and horror.

The frame about the low, open doorway was made of cedar logs.

To the one at the top, which had a semi-oval curve, was nailed a ghastly object.

It was a human hand.

CHAPTER II.

SOME IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS.

Nick Carter's surprise lasted but a moment.

Vincent Orton, pale and trembling, saw him advance until he stood close to the door frame, and so that the horrible thing was nearly on a line with his eyes.

For some time he stood gazing at the hand without speaking.

At last he turned to Orton and said:

"Whose is it? Do you know?"

"It is my uncle's," gasped the horrified young man. "I would have recognized it from its general appearance, but the scar on the back—from a burn—is proof positive."

"I thought so."

Nick scrutinized it a moment or two longer, and then uttered this opinion:

"It was cut from the arm of your uncle, but he was dead when the operation was performed, and furthermore, it was placed here during the past twenty-four hours."

"How do you arrive at that conclusion?"

"By my medical and scientific knowledge. If it had been cut from a live man there would be the blood evidences at the point of separation. There are none, as you may see."

"Yes, that is so."

"That it has been placed here within quite a recent period, and immediately following the amputation, its condition plainly shows, for as yet there are no signs of decomposition."

"It must remain as it is until the coroner comes," continued Nick. "We will notify him when we get back to Long Island City."

Not until every portion of the grounds had been explored did the two men leave the place.

After having seen the coroner, who in turn notified the local officers, Nick and Orton went over to Brooklyn.

The nephew of the murdered man—for there was no doubt in Orton's mind that Jacob Hanson had been murdered—was curious to know what theory the great detective had found, and the moment the Brooklyn train was under way he took occasion to ask him.

"I think," said Nick, "that your uncle was murdered and that the motive was robbery."

"Then William Torrens is the assassin?"

"I am not sure of that, Mr. Orton. In fact, it is my opinion that he had no criminal connection with the affair."

"How, then, do you explain his absence?"

"He was lured away."

Orton shook his head.

"I think you will find that he is the murderer," he said, with positiveness.

"And yet you asserted when his name was first mentioned that he was as honest a fellow as ever breathed."

"I was probably mistaken in my estimate of his character. He must have been a consummate actor."

"For twenty years?—that is the length of time he served your uncle, I believe?"

"His evil impulses may have been dormant. The knowledge that my uncle had a large sum of money in the house probably roused them."

"Hardly," returned Nick. "And now listen to me," he added, "and I will tell you what deductions I have made from my discoveries."

"The evidences at the house of your uncle all point to the conclusion that he disappeared early in the morning, and before breakfast. What caused his disappearance we have yet to discover, but it is certain to my mind that he left in a hurry and that he took his money, which must have been in notes, with him."

"I don't see how you arrive at that opinion," said Orton, doubtfully.

"You have not been trained to see the value of little things," replied Nick, imperturbably, "or you might have made a number of valuable discoveries. Now, the secret drawer, in which I found the small triangular piece of paper, evidently contained your uncle's money. It was locked when I found it, and it occupied such a position that no one but a professional burglar—I don't believe the assassin was one—or a detective who is versed in the ways of the lawless gentry, would likely have discovered it."

"Banknotes have a peculiar smell. When confined in a small space, almost air tight, the odor becomes intensified. My sense of smell is pretty acute, and when I bent over the drawer I knew in

an instant that it had lately been the receptacle of paper money.

"The presence of the piece of paper, caught in a crack, and torn from some important document, was another circumstance which pointed to the agency of your uncle, and not a robber, in the removal of the drawer's contents. A robber would probably have noticed the torn piece when he removed the document. If he was in a hurry, and did not notice it, he would certainly have made an effort to recover it after he had read the document and become aware of the value of the missing portion. Now a week has elapsed since your uncle disappeared, and the drawer has not been re-examined."

"You are arguing upon the presumption," said Orton, "that the villain who killed my uncle made his search of the house for the purpose of robbery immediately after my uncle's disappearance. Might he not have made his felonious visit to the house at a later period, within the last twenty-four hours, in fact?"

"No," returned Nick, with a smile.

"Explain, if you please."

"Before I do so, let us return a moment to the matter of the severed hand. If the murderer placed the hand there on the day he ransacked the house—which was then vacant—it is not likely that he would have been in such haste as to have left the torn piece of paper behind."

"Still he might have been in a hurry."

"You want better evidence, eh? I will now inform you that the murderer never went into the house at all yesterday or the day before."

"The proof," continued Nick, as he looked into Orton's puzzled face, "lies in this: When we made our investigation the hall and the kitchen floor—both uncarpeted—and in front of the only two entrances to the house, were each covered with a thick layer of dust."

"This dust must have accumulated during your uncle's absence, for you have in-

formed me that he was a model of order and neatness, and that Torrens, his man, swept out and dusted every day.

"I looked at the two floors closely. There was not a mark of a foot upon either of them."

Orton's face cleared.

He gave Nick a look of admiration.

But in a moment his brow clouded again.

"If my uncle was killed by the villain who placed the hand over the summer house door," he said, "then he must have robbed his person before or after the horrible crime; and having done so, he would become possessed of both the money and the document with the detached corner."

"I believe that he failed to find the money or anything of value on your uncle's person," said Nick, quietly. "If he had," he continued, "do you think he would not have returned to the house and searched for the missing part of the document?"

"Here's my theory of the disappearance:

"Your uncle was called away suddenly in the morning by some ruse of the villain, and went to keep a bogus appointment. As soon as he had gone the villain entered the house and turned things upside down in his search for the hidden money. Not finding it, he went to the place where your uncle had been drawn under false pretences, and assaulted him. Probably he knocked him down and gagged him. Then he searched your uncle's person to discover, to his rage, that the fortune he coveted was not in his victim's pockets. Your uncle had secreted the notes—why, I, as yet, have no idea—between the time that he left the house and that of his arrival at the place of appointment.

"This theory of mine will explain the after conduct of the villain who had Jacob Hanson in his power. He did not kill

your uncle immediately, because he hoped by intimidation, or torture, to make the old man tell him where he had secreted the banknotes.

"Failing after several days to induce Hanson to reveal the hiding-place, the fiend deliberately put him to death, and then, from a motive I have not yet fathomed, he went into your uncle's grounds and nailed the dead hand of his victim to the timbers of the summer house.

"He must have thought himself secure from suspicion, or he would never have perpetrated such an act.

"And now as to William Torrens' part in the affair:

"He did not cook your uncle's breakfast, but he did prepare his own.

"From this circumstance I infer that your uncle arose earlier than usual, and that after leaving the house he went directly to Torrens' cottage, and told him he was going away that day, and would not require his services in the kitchen that morning.

"Some time must have elapsed after this—an hour, let us say—before Torrens received the visit which induced his own departure.

"While at breakfast he was called upon by the villain or his accomplice. The communication which he made to Torrens must have been of a most important nature, for the man-of-all-work left his breakfast half finished and went out of the back door with the man who had come for him.

"Torrens' first impulse was to put on his best suit of clothes, and he took out his beaver hat as a preliminary movement to that end.

"His visitor, however, according to my view of the case, could not wait for the change, and hurried Torrens off in short order, so quickly, in fact, that your uncle's servant had not time to replace the beaver in the wardrobe.

"In the lane the villain dropped his

glove, and by means of the three yellowish hairs which I found under the thumb, and the cigar stump I picked up afterward on my way to the house, I hope to find him."

"Very insufficient clues, I should say," remarked Orton, in a despondent voice.

"They may not prove so. The cigar I recognize as a new importation, kept by but one firm in New York, and not ten days upon the market. It is called La Belle Cosette, is made of Havana, with a most peculiar flavor, and retails at twenty-five cents apiece.

"As for the hairs, I can speak of them to better purpose after I have examined them through a magnifying glass."

The train reached the Brooklyn station a few minutes after the foregoing conversation.

Nick and Orton lost no time in reaching No. —, Fulton street, the address written upon the small, triangular bit of paper.

It proved to be a lawyer's residence.

Luckily for Nick's investigation, the lawyer was at home.

"Are you Jacob Hanson's attorney?" was the great detective's opening question.

"I am."

Nick then introduced himself and afterward his companion.

When Vincent Orton's name was mentioned the lawyer looked at him keenly.

The impression the young man produced seemed to be a favorable one, for there was a pleasant smile on his face as he extended his hand.

"Won't you come in?" he asked, suavely.

"Thanks, yes, for we came to see you on business," said Hanson's nephew.

When the three men were seated in comfortable chairs in the study, Nick began:

"Jacob Hanson has mysteriously disappeared, and the evidence thus far adduced points to murder."

The lawyer's face—a shrewd, honest one, by the way—expressed both amazement and horror.

Nick informed him of the discoveries that had been made, without giving his deductions on the same.

"One week ago," mused the lawyer; "why, that was about the time, if I mistake not, that he sent me the telegram from Long Island City."

The great detective was all interest in an instant.

"May I ask what it was about?" he said.

"Certainly. In fact, as Mr. Orton's agent, you have a right to know. It was in relation to a small trunk. Let me see"—fumbling among the papers on his desk—"yes, here it is."

He handed Nick the following telegram, dated a week back, on the very day, in fact, of the disappearance:

"Send little trunk by transfer express to Vincent Orton, Princeton, New Jersey, after you have put in the package which I shall forward by next express. Don't delay. Important.

"JACOB HANSON."

"Did the package arrive?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what it contained?"

"Papers, I presume, from the feeling, but I did not examine it, of course."

"And you put the package in the trunk, did you?"

"Yes."

"And sent the package off as requested?"

"Yes."

Vincent Orton here put in a word.

"My home is at Princeton," he said, "and I presume my uncle must have thought I was there, when he gave the order. As a matter of fact, I have not been in Princeton for a fortnight."

"I wish you had been there a week ago."

"To have received the trunk?"

"Yes."

"But it's all right, of course. It is in the express or baggage room, awaiting my return."

"Let us hope so."

Then turning to the lawyer, Nick said:

"Do you know what the trunk contained before you placed the last package in it?"

"Papers, jewelry, trinkets, etc."

"What kind of papers?"

"Letters, mainly. The last document he handed to me, which was about ten days ago, was in the nature of a statement, so he informed me."

"A statement of what?"

"I do not know. He said, however, that it was very important, and when read, in connection with his will, would help to explain some portions of that document."

"Did he make a will?"

"No. He said he would attend to that matter the next time he called on me."

"Might he not have executed an olographic will after leaving you?"

"He might, certainly."

"And might not that will be among the papers of the package you received one week ago?"

"Yes."

"What's your opinion about that package, Mr. Carter?" asked Vincent Orton.

"I think it contained banknotes, and I think further that the statement he referred to had some connection with the document whose detached corner I found in the secret drawer."

"In that case," returned Orton, in fierce satisfaction, "we shall find a positive clew to the murderer when we examine the contents of the trunk."

"I believe we will."

"I will start for Princeton by the late train this evening. You must go with me, Mr. Carter."

"Very well."

They did not leave the lawyer's house,

however, until Nick had put other questions which elicited the information that Jacob Hanson was a very close-mouthed man, and that his legal adviser knew nothing of the millionaire's private life.

The detective and Orton reached Princeton about midnight.

The next morning they went to the office of the transfer company.

Presenting the check, which he had obtained from the Brooklyn lawyer, Nick asked if the trunk it called for was there.

The manager to whom the question was addressed, looked at his book and then began an investigation of the articles of baggage in the store-room.

"It is not there," was his answer, "and no trunk of that description, and with that address, has arrived at our office within the past month."

The great detective's brow clouded.

"Whatever can have become of it?" asked Orton, in perplexity.

"Lost or stolen," returned Nick, sententiously.

They visited the express offices and the railroad baggage rooms, hoping that the trunk might have arrived at one of them by mistake.

The hope was vain.

No tidings of the missing trunk could be discovered in the city.

"What do you think?" queried Orton, anxiously, after the search had been concluded. "Is the villain who killed my uncle responsible for this?"

"I will answer your question after we return to Brooklyn."

They arrived at that place shortly after noon.

Nick went straight from the train to the office of the transfer company which had first received the trunk.

A few questions sufficed to show that the trunk had started from Brooklyn on the day of its receipt.

"We can easily ascertain at what point

it was lost," said the clerk. "Call to-morrow morning and I will let you know."

Nick promised to do so.

Then he said:

"How many of you attend to this department?"

"Two; myself and John here," inclining his head toward a young man who was writing at a desk.

"You remember receiving the trunk, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes."

"Did any person make any inquiries in relation to it after it had been sent off?"

"Not of me."

"How about John?"

That individual, who had been listening to the conversation, spoke up promptly.

"No one has put any questions to me about it since Lawyer Raines gave it into my charge."

Nick and Orton left the office, the former in a better frame of mind than when he entered; the latter with a gloomy and disappointed expression.

An hour later they were in Long Island City.

Nick found the telegraph office from which Jacob Hanson had sent the message to the Brooklyn lawyer.

The operator, a sharp, intelligent young man, who had known the millionaire well, assured Nick that no one was in the office but himself when the telegram was sent.

"Where was Hanson?"

"I don't know."

"Did he not write the telegram here?"

"No. He came to my room in the hotel before I was up—about six o'clock in the morning, I should say—and wrote his message on a sheet of writing paper, paid me for it, and asked me to send it off the moment I reached the office. He also placed a package in my hands which he desired should be sent to Brooklyn by the first express."

Nick left the telegraph office with a satisfied air.

He had partaken of but a light breakfast at Princeton, and now led the way to a restaurant.

While waiting in a private room for the filling of the orders, Nick said to his companion:

"The information we received this afternoon at the transfer and telegraph offices has not cheered you up any, judging by your looks."

"No, it hasn't. But you are not so glum as you were. Have you made another of your queer discoveries?" he asked, as his countenance suddenly lighted up with hope.

"There is nothing queer about my discovery," returned Nick, quietly, "but what I have learned during the last two hours leads me to think that there is a good chance of recovering the trunk."

"Just before we left Princeton," the great detective proceeded, "you asked me if I thought the villain who killed your uncle was responsible for the disappearance of the trunk. I now answer no."

"The fact that no person made any inquiries at the transfer office about the trunk, and that no one could have known the nature of the telegram sent to the Brooklyn lawyer, proves this."

"We may therefore conclude, Mr. Orton, that the trunk has either been lost or stolen, and that, if stolen, the thief has no connection with the murderer of your uncle. In either case, the chances of finding the trunk are much better than if it had fallen into the hands of our mysterious quarry."

As they were leaving the restaurant the coroner of Queens County excitedly accosted them.

"We've solved the msytery, gentlemen," he said. "The bodies were discovered in Newtown Creek an hour ago."

"Whose bodies?" asked the great detective, quickly.

"Those of Jacob Hanson and William Torrens. The men had been murdered, the bodies then tied together, weighted down with stones, and sunk in the creek."

Vincent Orton covered his face with his hands and groaned.

"Was the body of Hanson mutilated?" asked Nick Carter.

"Yes. The right hand was gone."

CHAPTER III.

THE MAN WITH THE YELLOW DOG.

Nick went to the morgue and looked at the bodies.

Dr. Huntington, a well-known physician and surgeon, was there, the coroner having asked him to make a post-mortem examination.

Decomposition had not set in, though the flesh had been eaten away in places.

"How long have they been dead, doctor?" asked Nick.

"Not more than two or three days," was the reply.

"Have you ascertained the cause of death?"

"There are no visible wounds and none of the exterior indications of poisoning. But there are marks on the neck of each which induce the belief that they were strangled. If the autopsy shows no traces of poison in the stomach, I shall not hesitate to declare that they were choked to death."

"The right hand of the older victim has been amputated. Was the operation performed before or after death?"

Nick was well satisfied on this point, but he desired the doctor to confirm the opinion he had expressed to Vincent Orton for the latter's benefit.

"It was removed after death."

The bodies had been tied with common baling ropes.

Not a piece of money, an article of jewelry, or a scrap of paper, was found upon either of them.

"Who discovered the bodies?" asked Nick of the coroner.

"Mark Quale, a fisherman."

"Where is he?"

"On the sidewalk outside."

Nick found him the centre of a group of excited citizens.

Calling him aside, the great detective put such questions as speedily placed him in possession of all the essential facts relating to the ghastly find.

Quale was rowing down the creek, the water at ebb tide, when he saw the corpses in the water, a few yards from shore, and under the overhanging branches of a large tree.

Nick and Orton were soon at the spot.

Near the tree were the tracks of a narrow, two-wheeled vehicle, and the footprints of a man and a dog.

It was possible that all the tracks had been made after the casting of the bodies in the stream, and also that they bore no connection, guilty or otherwise, with the terrible crime which had been committed.

But Nick Carter never slighted his work.

He noticed that the wheelmarks were made with wide tires, and that the depressions in the soil were slight.

This seemed to indicate that the vehicle was a light one.

Narrow, light, and with wide tires was an unusual combination.

"It was never turned out of a factory," was Nick's quick conclusion. "It is the handiwork, probably of some original genius who has made use of the parts of several vehicles."

After taking accurate measurements of the tracks of the man and the dog, Nick and Orton retraced their steps to town.

When they reached the morgue they learned that the post-mortem examination had been concluded, and that no traces of poison had been found in the stomachs of the murdered men.

Nick, who had no desire to be a wit

ness at the inquest, saw the coroner, told that official that Orton would furnish all the evidence necessary as to the discoveries at Hanson's residence, and then left the dead millionaire's nephew to begin an investigation in a new line.

It was evident to his mind that Jacob Hanson had left his house on receipt of an important message of some kind.

"If the villain who murdered him had dared to visit the house himself while Hanson was there," mused Nick, "he would not likely have made any appointment to meet him somewhere else. He would have killed the old man then and there, and searched the house immediately afterward.

"Therefore," ran the great detective's thoughts, "he sent a message to lure him away. To whom was it entrusted? Not to a regular messenger, I'll be bound, for in that event a clew to the murderer's identity would be furnished.

"What more likely than that he should select some small boy, one of the gamins of Long Island City?"

Desirous of testing this theory at once, Nick went down to the wharves where there were many urchins.

Selecting half a dozen who impressed him favorably, he marshaled them under the shade of a warehouse, and thus addressed them:

"Do you want to try for five dollars, boys?"

"Does we?" they spoke in chorus, and then the smallest and the sharpest-faced added, quickly: "Does we like dough? Well, I should muffer."

"A letter was delivered at Jacob Hanson's house eight days ago, and very early in the morning, too, by a boy, I think. Now, I want you to find him for me. The one who succeeds shall have five dollars. The others who try their best to find him, but fail, shall get a dollar each."

"We'll find him, boss," said the little one. "How long will yer give us?"

"Until six o'clock, and the report must be made to me here. Now, scatter, and take every portion of the city."

They were off like a shot.

At six o'clock Nick was once more by the warehouse.

The little gamin with the sharp face turned up a moment later.

With him was a boy a few years older.

Nick looked at the ragged clothes, the pinched, eager, good-humored face, and said, kindly:

"What is your name?"

"Nigel Burke, yer honor, but de kids I runs wid call me Nig fer short."

At this moment the other members of the searching contingent came running up.

Nick pulled out his purse, gave a five-dollar gold piece to the little chap who had found Nig, the messenger, and put a silver dollar into the hand of each of the five other boys.

Then he told them to scamper.

When they had gone he beckoned Nig to follow him.

There was a pile of lumber down the wharf a piece.

Finding a good seat thereon, Nick began his inquisition.

"You went on an errand for a strange man eight days ago, I believe?"

"Right you are, mister."

"Where did you meet the man?"

"Down by ther crik. I'd just bin hit-tin' de water a lick fer me helt."

"Been in swimming, you mean?"

"O' course."

"Was the man alone?"

"Naw, he had a dorg wit' him—a yaller dorg no bigger'n a cat."

Nick's eyes twinkled in satisfaction.

"Can you remember exactly how the man looked? I want his description, Nig."

The urchin scratched his head.

"Well," he said, after a pause, "he looked like lots o' der mugs yer sees in Brooklyn an' 'cross de river."

"Tall or short?"

"Neider."

"Medium sized, then."

"Yep."

"Stout or slender?"

"He was built from de groun' up."

"How about his hands?"

"Dey was corks; bigger'n Sullivan's."

"And his face?"

"He wore a brown beard dat covered it up so 't yer couldn't see nuffin' but his beak an' his lamps."

"What kind of a nose had he?"

"Big un—like a sheeny's."

"And what sort of eyes?"

"Sharp an' black—they could look right troo a feller."

"How was he dressed?"

"Gray suit, an' a brown beavy fer his cocoanut."

"Did you notice any peculiarity about him?"

"W'at's dat?"

"Anything queer?"

"On'y his voice. It wasn't like a man's, it was jest like a woman's, an' had a funny squeak in it."

Well satisfied with the result of his examination thus far, Nick now approached the subject of the message.

"What did the man want of you, Nig?" he asked.

"He wanted ter know in de firs' place, w'y I was at de crik dat early in de mornin'. I tole him dat I'd bin on a jag de night afore, an' as I hadn't de dough fer a Turkish bat', I tort I'd give der crik a rattle."

"What did he say to that?"

"Der mug laughed an' said I was a turrerbred. Den he axst me did I live wid me mudder."

"'Naw,' says I, 'me mudder is dead, an' I lives wit meself.'"

"'Purty hard time makin' bot' ends meet, ain't it?' says he."

"'Now yer talk,' says I, 'fer some days I don't make ernuff ter keep er spider erlive. I ain't had not'n but booze fer two days,' says I, givin' him der wink, 'an' me stummick is cleavin' ter me back-bone dis blessed minute.'"

"Der mug worked anudder laugh. Den he says:

"'Got any 'lations in New York?'"

"'Not as I knows on,' says I, 'but I got an unk in Californy.'"

"'Do yer know the name of the town he lives in?'" der mug says.

"'Dutch Flat,' says I."

"'How would yer like ter go out ter yer uncle?'" says he.

"'I'd giv der worl', fer he's me mudder's brudder an' a loo loo.'"

"De mug, he says nutin' fer a minute. Den he looks me all over, an' says as slow as a parson: 'I will buy you a ticket fer Californy an' put you 'board de train, if you will do me one little favor.'"

"'W'at's dat?' says I, so quick it would make yer head swim."

"'The simple carryin' of er message ter a man in Ravenswood.'"

"'Gimme der message,' I says, holdin' out me fist."

"Der mug had it all fixed, an' he put a welop in my han' an' says I mus' give it to old Jake Hanson. 'If he ain't home,' says der mug, 'bring der letter back ter me. I'll be waitin' here.'"

"Off I goes like a streak o' greased lightnin', mister. I found der house, give der welop ter old Jake, and den run back ter de crik."

"Dere was der mug an' de dorg a-waitin' fer me."

"'Here's yer ticket,' says he, and I tole him it was O. K., 'an' I'll go down to der train an' see yer off.'"

"Sure ernuff, he did, an' when der train started, he put a tenner in me hand."

"'Fer pocket money,' says he, 'an' ter

buy grub wid. Now, be a good boy an' don't fall off'n de train.' "

Nig paused and a huge grin showed itself on his sharp, cunning face.

"You did not go to California, it seems," remarked Nick, with a smile.

"Naw. New York is good ernuff fer me. I sold de ticket ter a chump at der depot in Jersey City fer a twenny, an' took de nex' boat fer home. Las' night I blew in der dough I made on der job, an' here I is ter-day widout a cent."

"Aren't you afraid of meeting the man who gave you the ticket and the money?"

"Naw. He'll be der one ter be 'fraid. If I see him, I'll tell him I lost me ticket an' strike him fer annudder. An' I'll bet a big cart wheel, mister," the enterprising urchin added, "dat he'll come to der centre too quick wen I tells him wat I found out."

"And what's that, Nig?" queried Nick, quietly.

The boy evaded the question by saying:

"Der kid wat brung me here said you'd do ther grand wit' me. I ain't seen de color yet."

Nick put a ten-dollar gold piece in his hand.

After he had tried his teeth on the gold and put it in his pocket he satisfied his patron by saying:

"I found out wat was in der letter he gimme."

"How did you find out?" he asked, quickly.

"By openin' der welop."

"What induced you to do it?"

"Well, mister," replied Nig, earnestly, "I s'picioned dat der mug was no good wen he offered to gimme a ticket ter Californy jest fer doin' a nickel job; see?"

"Yes, I see."

"An' so I made up me mind ter pipe off der business. So wen I got half way to der house I sits me down un'r a tree, wets der seal, opens der welop an' reads

der letter. It was short an' sweet, an' this is wat it said:

" 'Come at once to Farley's Hotel on der Flushing road near der bay if you wish ter see the man, Luther, before he dies.' It was signed P. Wright, M. D., an' it had a P. S. which said, 'Bring dis note wit' yer so dat Farley may be sure you're der right man.' Dats' all," concluded the urchin.

"Nig, you're a wonder," said Nick, with admiring eyes. "It's not every boy who has such a memory as you."

"I've said dat letter over more'n a hundred times to meself," rejoined the boy, modestly, "fer I tort dere was some-thin' in it fer me."

"There is, when you have assisted me in doing a little work that I know you will like. I want you to find the man who wrote the letter if he is now anywhere about these parts. If you succeed I will give you fifty dollars."

Nig's eyes opened to their widest extent.

"I'll find him, mister," he said, with eager earnestness, "let me erlone fer dat."

As he spoke a young man passed them.

He was well dressed, had a smooth face, a small, sharp nose, a keen eye, and a square, resolute chin.

Giving the detective and the boy a careless glance, he proceeded a few yards and stopped, for the purpose, seemingly, of witnessing the unloading of a truck filled with merchandise.

Nick parted with the boy soon after this.

When the inquest was over that afternoon, the verdict in each case being death at the hands of some party or parties unknown to the jury, the great detective found Orton.

The young man had something to communicate.

"I am going over to New York," he said, "for since I last saw you I have

learned that my English cousin, Cuthbert Orton, is at the Waldorf. While waiting for my turn to be examined I picked up a paper and saw his name among the late arrivals. After I have seen and had a long talk with him, I will come back, or you can come over, and we can then discuss the matter together."

"I will be over in the morning," returned Nick, after a pause.

"Very well."

Orton was moving away when Nick, actuated by a sudden thought, called him back.

"Couldn't you postpone your trip awhile so that we could call upon your cousin together?"

Orton looked his surprise.

"I don't see——" he began, when Nick interrupted him.

"I have a reason for asking this favor of you," the latter said, earnestly, "which I will explain later on. Remain here to-night, and we'll take the first boat in the morning."

"All right, then."

They went to the hotel, where they had registered previously—Nick in an assumed name—and had left their baggage, and securing a room sat down for a short rest.

"I have got to take a little trip into the country after dark," said the great detective, "and want you to remain here to receive a report that may be made by a boy assistant I have engaged."

Nick then told him about Nig and the letter which had been delivered to Jacob Hanson.

Vincent Orton's fine face flushed with excitement.

"You'll get the villain, I do believe," he said.

"I shall try," replied Nick, "but I may fail, for he's a crafty fellow, and it is possible that the full extent of his cunning has not yet been revealed. But I

have a duty to perform before I take another step in this business."

He took out his pocket-book, found the little package containing the three hairs which had been taken from the glove picked up in the lane outside William Torrens' cottage, and placed it on a little table by his side.

Next he produced a magnifying glass.

Opening the paper that held the hairs, he began to examine them with the glass.

"As I thought," was his comment. "They are not the hairs of a human being."

"Why aren't they?"

"Because they are short and pointed, for one thing. That shows that they have not been cut. And there's a difference with which I am familiar, between the hair of a man and the hair of a dog."

"Then these are dog's hairs, are they?"

"Undoubtedly, and they came from a yellow, short-haired animal."

"I see, I see," said the young man, quickly. "They came from the yellow dog which belonged to the man who hired Nig to deliver the letter."

"It looks that way."

"Find the dog, then, and you will find the master."

"That's a reasonable inference. Perhaps Nig has done so already."

But when darkness came on and Nick was ready for his trip into the country, the boy had not yet shown himself.

The first thing the great detective did after leaving Orton was to wire his assistant, Chick, in relation to certain matters he wished attended to in New York.

Then, disguised as a German peddler, and with a pack of knickknacks on his back, he took the Flushing road when he left Long Island City, and by rapid walking reached Farley's Hotel about nine o'clock.

He knew the place bore an evil reputation, and this fact to him was an explanation.

tion of the postscript to the letter sent to Jacob Hanson.

The villain who afterward murdered him, so Nick reasoned, was not at Farley's when his victim arrived there, but was engaged in ransacking the millionaire's house.

To make sure that Farley, who was probably his accomplice, would receive the right man, the postscript had been written requiring Hanson to present the letter as an identification.

The hotel was in an out of the way place, and was patronized principally by crooks and their mistresses.

The barroom door was open as Nick approached, and the bright light shining within enabled him to see two persons standing at the counter.

One of them was the young man with the smooth face who had passed Nick and Nig while they were sitting on the lumber pile at the wharf in Long Island City.

The other wore a heavy brown beard and had a pronounced Roman nose.

The great detective started when he caught sight of his face, and his excitement, natural under the circumstances, increased when he heard the large-nosed man speak.

His voice was soft and light, and resembled that of a woman.

In the full belief that he was looking upon the murderer of Jacob Hanson, the great detective masked his feelings, put on a stolid face, and walked up to the door.

His foot was on the threshold, when the vicious snapping of a small dog at his heels caused him to turn and administer a kick to the canine that sent him away yelping with pain.

But the one glance that Nick flashed on the dog made his heart beat with fierce exultation.

The yelping of the cur brought the large-nosed man quickly to the door.

"What's the matter?" he asked, sharp-

ly, in his feminine voice, and bestowing an angry look on the disguised detective.

"Dere vos plendy ouf madder," returned Nick, in affected indignation. "He vos dryin' to cut beefsdeags oof mein legs alretty, ven I bounced him. Of you vas der owner py dot tog, maybe you want to taig it oop, vonce I ton'd know," he added, with a quick assumption of comical ferocity.

The man laughed.

"No, I'm no fighter, Dutçay," he replied, pleasantly. "Come in and take a drink and forget all about the dog."

"Tank you, misder, for ven efer I trink it's about dis dime oof tay, alretty."

With these words Nick walked into the barroom.

CHAPTER IV.

NICK MEETS WITH A SURPRISE.

Ab Farley, the proprietor of the hotel, was behind the bar.

He was a tall, thin-faced Irishman, with little, restless black eyes, set close together.

Nick and the Roman-nosed individual drank, and then the latter, who appeared to be somewhat under the influence of liquor, asked the false peddler to open his pack.

"Maybe you've got something I want," he said.

Nick knelt down on the floor, opened his pack, and spread out the articles it contained.

The young man with the smooth face, who had been sitting in a chair while the disguised detective and the owner of the yellow dog were talking at the bar, now got up and ran his eye over the pack's contents.

Suddenly, and while Nick's eyes were now on him, he brushed past the latter quickly, slightly disarranging the wig which formed a part of the detective's disguise.

Nick felt that the collision had been intentional.

After readjusting the wig by pretending to push back his hat, he gave one swift glance at the smooth-faced young man and saw that he was standing in the doorway looking out.

"Well," said Roman Nose, who seemed not to have noticed that anything out of the ordinary had occurred, "I don't see anything in your stock that I want but that little pocket comb. How much is it?"

"Hooften cent, misder."

"Here's a quarter."

Nick produced an eel-skin purse and made the change.

He was now anxious to get out of the saloon, for he suspected that the smooth-faced young man had guessed that he was a detective.

"He will follow me when I leave," was his thought; "but if he thinks that I am ignorant of his discovery, I'll stand some chance of getting away with him."

He was in the act of shouldering his pack again, when Roman Nose said to Farley:

"I think I'll retire, old man. Call me early, for I want to be in New York in time for breakfast."

Nick looked up and saw him start for a door at the rear which opened out onto a stairway.

At that moment the man in the doorway gave Farley a quick, meaning glance, and then turned and came toward the disguised detective.

Nick was within a few feet of the bar counter, but suspecting an attack, he stepped back so as to face both of his supposed enemies.

The moment he moved, Farley, quick as a flash, flung a bottle at his head.

Nick instantly threw up his arm and caught the missile on the elbow.

The next instant he was on his knees

to receive the onslaught of the man with the smooth face.

That individual had leaped forward at the moment the bottle was thrown, intending to clutch the detective by the throat.

Nick was ready for him, and before the fellow could think twice, the detective had grasped him by the ankles and thrown him over his head.

He struck the bar counter with such force that it rattled as if affected by an earthquake, and sent a tray of glasses crashing to the floor.

Farley was at the end of the counter at the time, on his way to assist his evil comrade.

Nick turned to meet him, and, dodging another glass, sprang upon the villain and bore him to the floor.

The two men were engaged in a desperate struggle when something heavy descended on the courageous detective's head which made him see stars.

He felt his senses leaving him and made an effort to rise to his feet, when a second blow stretched him senseless beside the bar. When he recovered consciousness he was out of doors; and Nig, the Long Island City gamin, was bending over him with an anxious face.

"You ain't dead! Goody!" he exclaimed in a voice of delight.

"Where am I?" asked Nick, in bewilderment, as he raised himself on his elbow.

"About a quarter of a mile from Farley's."

"Who brought me here?"

"Two mugs."

"When?"

"Half an hour ago. Hully-gee, but didn't I scatter 'em."

"Scatter 'em? How?"

"Dey was a-luggin' you along, mister, an' I heered one say dat dey'd put you in de brush a piece ahead an' do you up fer good, wen I pulled me pop an' let 'er

"Hully-gee," chuckled the boy, "but you orter see 'em drop you an' light out. De moon was a-shinin', an' dey went so fast dat I could a-played marbles on dere coat tails."

"'Come on, fellers,' I shouted, wen I let me pop go off, 'we'se got 'em sure.'"

"They must have thought there was a mob of officers after them, Nig."

"Cert, an' I kep after 'em, but outer sight, mind, until dey took de Flushin' road."

"They didn't go back to the hotel, then?"

"Not much."

"And what brought you out this way, Nig?" asked the detective.

"Follered der mug wat had der dog."

"Where did you first see him?"

"On de outskirts of Ravenswood, 'bout dusk."

"It was the man with the Roman nose and the heavy beard that you saw, was it?"

"Didn't I say so? An' I follered him till he got away from me in de dark. I was two or tree hours monkeyin' roun' dis neighborhood, wen I seen der two mugs luggin' you in der path."

"Where did you get your revolver, Nig?"

"Bought it wid der boodle you gimme, mister."

"That was a sensible action. I shall not soon forget what you have done for me, Nig."

The great detective arose to his feet. He felt sore and weak, but his skull was intact, a couple of lumps on the scalp being the only evidences of his injuries.

"I must have been knocked out with a clubbed revolver," was his conclusion, "and it was probably at Farley's suggestion that I was taken out of the saloon to be killed, and to have my body disposed of where no one would be likely to find it."

After washing his face and bathing his head in a pool by the roadside a short distance from the spot where he had been hastily dropped by his enemies, Nick determined to go back to Farley's.

He was of the opinion that the villains had received a terrible scare, and that they would not be seen in that locality again.

In all probability they had taken the pistol shots fired by Nig as an attack by a posse of officers, which had followed the detective, whose disguise had been penetrated by the man with the smooth face.

All was still about the hotel when they arrived in sight of it, and there were no lights burning in any part of the building.

Nick and Nig went to the rear, keeping in the shadow of the trees which grew thickly about.

On the side of the steps leading to the kitchen was an inclined door which probably opened into the cellar.

After waiting in concealment for some time and hearing nothing, Nick determined to enter the building by means of the cellar.

Nig, meanwhile, was to remain in sight of the cellar door until Nick returned, unless suspicious voices outside, or the appearance of an enemy, should warrant a change of position.

The great detective found the cellar door unlocked.

He opened it, and noiselessly descended the stairs.

Once inside the cellar he drew the slide of his bull's-eye, which had been previously lighted, and flashed its rays over the underground room.

Nothing but barrels and boxes met his view.

After these had been carefully inspected, he mounted the stairs which led to the bar-room.

The trap-door lifted at his first push, and he was soon on the scene of his late encounter.

Near the first door he made his first discovery.

Lying upon its back, with its skull crushed in with a hatchet, was the dead body of the yellow dog.

A search of the hotel from top to bottom failed to reveal the presence of a human being.

Nick rejoined his boy assistant, and together they returned to Long Island City.

In the morning, after the great detective had had a few hours' sleep, he started with Vincent Orten for the ferry.

Nig accompanied them to the wharf, but the boat did not carry his employer away until he had received his fifty dollars, and had been the recipient of further instructions.

Nick and Orten landed at Thirty-fourth street, took the L train, and in a short time were at the Waldorf.

The chief clerk informed them that Cuthbert Orten had just stepped out.

They were on the sidewalk again when Vincent Orten suddenly exclaimed:

"There he is now."

A stoutly-built young man of medium height was coming toward them.

Nick Carter gave him one glance and clenched his teeth.

For the English cousin of Vincent Orten was the man with the Roman nose and the heavy brown beard.

CHAPTER V.

CUTHBERT ORTON'S ALIBI.

Nick glanced at his companion and saw no sign of suspicion on his countenance.

Cuthbert Orten came to them, his face beaming with pleasure.

The cousins shook hands cordially, and each seemed overjoyed to see the other.

Nick was introduced, and he would have made the arrest then and there, but for the smiling, friendly way in which the Englishman greeted him.

"I have heard of you, Mr. Carter," he

said, in his soft, feminine voice, "and I hope you have undertaken the task of finding the murderer of my uncle. Poor old man! I came to America to see him and last evening I learned that he is dead — has been foully murdered."

"I have been engaged by your cousin to hunt the assassin," replied Nick, politely.

"So I supposed when Vincent introduced me. Have you made any discoveries as yet?" he added, eagerly.

"A few."

"What are they?"

"If you and your cousin will wait down to my office, I will tell you, and we can then have a thorough discussion of the matter."

"I will go with pleasure," said the Englishman.

On the way to the office Nick walked by Cuthbert Orten's side, ready to seize him should he make an attempt to run away.

But apparently the Englishman had no such thought in his mind, for he surprised Nick by taking his arm and chatting in the most sociable manner.

Nick's office consisted of two rooms with a door connection.

Chick, his assistant, had standing instructions to leave the large room when Nick transacted his business, should it happen to be in when his chief approached, and betake himself to the smaller apartment, there to remain until he received a signal to depart.

Nick's approach to the large room was always heralded by a peculiar stamp of the foot at the head of the stairs.

When the great detective ushered the two Ortons into his office there were certain evidences before him which showed that Chick had just left.

Nick asked his companions to be seated.

They took the lounge near the street window. The great detective placed him-

self in a chair near the door, and so as to place them.

At the moment he opened his lips to speak, Chick, in the next room, had his ear to a tube which connected with his thief's room, and by means of which he was able to overhear all that was said.

Feeling secure of getting the better of Cuthbert Orton in case he should attempt to give trouble, Nick opened the ball by saying, quietly:

"I was over at Ab Farley's, near Flushing Bay, last evening."

Cuthbert Orton started.

"Were you?" he said, in surprise, but without a trace of apprehension.

"Yes, and I believe I saw you there."

"I was at Farley's, certainly," was the prompt reply, "but you—I don't remember——"

"I was the German peddler."

"Indeed! You were well disguised, I am sure."

"Not well enough to deceive your friend, the young man with the smooth face," said Nick, coldly.

Cuthbert Orton frowned.

"He is not my friend," he replied, with equal coldness.

The Englishman's manner was not in keeping with that of a man who had committed a heinous crime, and had received an intimation that his guilty secret was known.

But if he was not the criminal, there was a chain of circumstantial evidence against him which would require evidence of a plain and direct character to explain away.

Holding his judgment in abeyance, the great detective proceeded:

"Who is this man whom you consorted with at Farley's disreputable joint, if he is not your friend?"

Cuthbert Orton's face flushed angrily.

Neither the question nor the tone in which it was uttered accorded with his notions of fairness.

"You assume, sir," said he, with cool dignity, "that I have not spoken truthfully. You even go further than that and insinuate——"

"Stop," said Nick, firmly, "I do not insinuate anything. I have a right to speak plainly and unflatteringly, for I barely escaped being murdered at Farley's last night."

"You did?"

The Englishman looked the picture of amazement.

"Yes. I will speak about it later."

"And do you connect me with the attempt on your life?" regarding Nick with virtuously indignant eyes.

"I hope," was the grave reply, "that you may be able to convince me that you have no share in the dastardly work."

"Of course he hadn't, Mr. Carter," broke in Vincent Orton, warmly. "Cuthbert is a gentleman, and his character is above reproach. How can you make such a terrible accusation?"

Nick smiled.

"I have not made any accusation against your cousin as yet."

Then turning to the Englishman he said, quietly:

"We can get at the bottom of this mystery by proceeding methodically. First, I would like an answer to my last question. Who was the young man with the smooth face who was with you at Farley's last night?"

"He was my valet for a year in England."

"Did he accompany you to America?"

"No. I discharged him in London nearly a year ago. He came on here ahead of me."

"What is his name?"

"Edwin Luther."

"Why did you discharge him?"

"He was impudent and presuming."

"His offense was not a serious one, then?"

"No."

"When and where did you first meet him in America?"

"At Princeton, New Jersey, about ten days ago."

"What caused you to go there?"

"A desire to see my Cousin Vincent here. But he was not at home, so I returned to New York."

"Do you know what Luther's business was in Princeton?"

"He said he came there to see me. He heard of my arrival in New York, he said, went to the Waldorf where I had registered, found I had gone to Princeton a few hours before, and took the next train."

"Well, what did he want of you?"

"He wanted me to go with him to Ravenswood."

"What for?"

"To be present at an interview he desired to have with my uncle, Jacob Hanson."

"What business did he desire to transact with your uncle?"

"He did not tell me, though I asked him several times. 'You'll know when we see the old coon,' was all the reply he would make."

"And did you go to Ravenswood with him?"

"I did the next day. For I was naturally very curious to learn just what this fellow could have to do with my uncle, and I suspected everything was not as it should be."

"How long ago is it since you took this trip?"

"Nine days ago, I think."

"And did you call on your uncle?"

"Yes."

"With Luther?"

"No; I went alone at his request to pave the way. I was instructed to tell my uncle that Luther would pay him a visit the next day."

"How did Mr. Hanson receive your information?"

"Not very amiably. He stormed and swore, and said that Luther was a scoundrel and he wished he were dead."

"Did you ask him to tell you what land he knew about Luther?"

"I did, but he refused obstinately."

"After you left your uncle's house where did you go?"

"To the place where I had left Luther — Ab Farley's. I did not know, then, that it bore a bad reputation."

"Did your uncle know that Luther was staying there?"

"Yes, Luther told me to so inform him."

"Where did you stay that night?"

"In New York. I went on a late boat."

"Did Luther go with you?"

"No; and I never saw him again until yesterday."

"Did he know that you intended to go to New York?"

"No. On the contrary, he thought I intended to stay over night at Long Island City. I told him so, but changed my mind after I had left him."

"Did you take your dog back to New York with you, when you left Farley's that morning?"

"No."

"Why didn't you?"

"He was nowhere to be seen when I was ready to depart."

"But you found him afterward, didn't you?"

"Yes, yesterday."

"Who had been in possession of the dog during the eight days you were parted from him?"

"Farley."

Nick now took a new tack.

"What occasioned your visit to Farley's yesterday?"

"A note from Luther, asking me to meet him there, as he had something important to communicate to me."

"What was the communication?"

"He said that my uncle had been mur-

ferred, and that I was suspected. He had heard two detectives discussing the matter, and they said they knew where I was, and as soon as they had got a little more evidence together they intended to go to the Waldorf and arrest me. His advice was that I should disguise myself and leave the country immediately."

"What did you say to that?"

"I laughed in the fellow's face."

"It's no laughing matter, Mr. Orton," Luther replied, soberly, 'for you' were seen to enter your uncle's house the night before his disappearance, and your dog was caught on the premises the next day.'

"I don't care what evidence they've got,' I answered back, hotly, 'I am going to stay here and face it. I am innocent, and they can't hang an innocent man.'

"But they do sometimes,' the fellow responded.

"Shortly after this conversation—it occurred last evening—we went into the saloon to take a drink. Just then you came in, Mr. Carter." Cuthbert Orton paused.

His story had been told smoothly and with a frank earnestness that greatly impressed the detective.

The inquisition, however, was not yet over.

"When you left the saloon after buying a pocket-comb of me," queried Nick, "where did you go?"

"Upstairs to the room I had engaged for the night."

"You remained there all night?"

"No. A few minutes after my departure from the bar-room, I heard the sounds of a scuffle down stairs. Pretty soon Edwin Luther came up, and entering my room without knocking, said in an excited voice that they had just kicked a detective out of the saloon, and that if I did not want to be arrested before morning I had better make myself scarce in that region.

"At first I refused to budge, but when he told me that Farley was a tough customer, and that the place was the resort of lawless characters, I concluded to follow his advice. But I did not hide, however. I went boldly to Long Island City, and stayed until morning, then took the first boat for the city."

"Did you pass through Farley's bar-room on your way out?"

"Yes."

"And you saw nothing of me—the German peddler?"

"No."

"Where were Farley and Luther when you left the joint?"

"In the bar-room."

"And your dog—where was he?"

"He had disappeared for the second time."

Nick considered a moment, then looking Cuthbert Orton full in the face, he said:

"There is a boy in Long Island City who is prepared to swear in a court of justice that he saw a man answering your description, and with your peculiar voice"—the Englishman blushed slightly—"who was accompanied by a small yellow dog, at one of the wharves of that place on the morning after your visit to Jacob Hanson's house; and that the man hired him to deliver a message to Jacob Hanson and waited for the boy's return."

"I can prove by the night clerk at the Waldorf that I occupied my room in that hotel the night before, and there are half a dozen employees of the place who will swear that I was downstairs, from six till eight, next morning. I am a very early riser, you must understand."

"Good," said Nick.

Then he added:

"I don't think that Luther is aware of the fact that you can prove this alibi."

"Then you think as I do," said the Englishman, quickly. "He is the murderer."

"When did that thought strike you, Mr. Orton?"

"A few minutes ago. I am very stupid, I will admit, or I might have guessed it at the last conversation I had with the scoundrel."

Nick touched a bell on the table by his side.

The door communicating with the next apartment opened, and Chick's shrewd, intelligent face showed itself.

"Gentlemen," said the great detective, addressing the cousins, gravely, after he had introduced Young Hercules, "I am going to send my assistant to the Waldorf to verify the statement made by Mr. Cuthbert Orton regarding his presence at that hotel on the night of the 8th and morning of the 9th insts. As a detective, who must not allow his judgment to be biased by ex parte evidence, it is my duty to take this step."

The cousins frankly coincided with him.

"I am most anxious that the truth of my words should appear," said the Englishman, earnestly.

Chick was gone half an hour.

He returned with the information that Cuthbert Orton's alibi was perfect.

Nick's face brightened at once.

"It will now give me pleasure to shake your hand," he said to the Englishman.

"It didn't, then, a while ago," laughed Cuthbert Orton.

"No for I had about made up my mind when I first met you that you were the guilty man.

"And now to business," he continued, as he resumed his seat. "The man who murdered your uncle intended that suspicions should be directed toward you."

"It looks that way, Mr. Carter."

"And in the belief that you had remained in Long Island City on the night preceding Jacob Hanson's disappearance, he urged you, when the bodies of his murdered victims had been discovered,

to fly the country, knowing that such an action, taken in connection with the circumstantial evidence, which would be easily forthcoming, would furnish additional proof of your guilt."

"The scoundrel!"

"To make the case against you as black as possible, he stole your dog and kept it about Long Island City for days after your uncle's disappearance, and also allowed himself to be seen in a disguise that would make the average man swear it was you."

Nick then told him what discoveries he had made.

Cuthbert Orton's amazement was only equaled by his indignation.

"There was one thing Luther did not count upon," said Nick, "and that was the discovery of his employment of Nig, the gamin. He supposed he had sent the boy to California."

It was soon after this that the Ortons took their leave.

When they had gone, Nick turned to Chick, and in his quick, abrupt manner, asked:

"Well, and what have you found out?"

"Your instructions, wired me last evening, were to go to No. — Park Row, see one Malcom and find out who Luther was."

It will be remembered that Nick got his cue for this investigation from the last entry made in William Torrens' memorandum book.

"I found Malcom, who is a cigar maker, and he said Luther was an old chum of his and frequently spent the night with him at his room in the same building.

"Malcom is an honest fellow, and therefore I confided in him to a certain extent.

"He said Luther had been an actor, but had quit the stage to enter into possession of a fortune left him by a near relative.

"I asked Malcom if he knew the rela-

tion's name. He answered in the negative.

"But he gave me one bit of information that I know will please you, Nick. He said Luther had promised to stay with him to-night."

"That is good news indeed, Chick."

Nick then filled up the gaps in the case as far as his investigations had proceeded, and asked Chick for an opinion in relation to the severed hand and the actions of Jacob Hanson after leaving home.

"I think," said Young Hercules, slowly, "that the hand was nailed up over the summer house in a spirit of mingled bravado and revenge."

"Revenge for what? The failure to get the old man's money?"

"No, Nick, it was something deeper than that."

"My opinion, Chick."

"The murderer had feared something from the operation of that hand; what it was we may know when we find the trunk."

"That's one way to explain the matter. It may be the correct one. We'll see."

"As for Hanson's peculiar actions, they may have been caused by the fear before he left the house to go to Farley's, that he was to be made the victim of some deception on the part of Luther."

"Good. You've fallen into my line of reasoning exactly."

"Knowing Luther to be a scoundrel, the thought, perhaps, came to him while he was preparing to start to keep the appointment, that Luther might have caused the letter to be written in order to get him out of the house and thus leave the way open for the villain's entrance in search of money."

"To provide against a surprise of that sort, and to foil Luther's schemes in the event his suspicions were not astray, Hanson took his wealth with him, and proceeding first to the room of the telegraph operator, sent the message to his

lawyer in Brooklyn, arranged for the expressage of the package of notes, and afterward took the road to Farley's."

"You reason well, Chick. In fact, there is no other theory that will satisfactorily explain Jacob Hanson's conduct."

Half an hour later the two detectives, thoroughly disguised, were on their way to Brooklyn.

Nick was anxious to learn what discoveries had been made in relation to the lost trunk.

The mystery that surrounded the relationship that existed between the murderer and Jacob Hanson might be solved if the trunk could be found with its contents intact.

At the transfer company's office, Nick found the clerk with whom he had spoken the day before.

When convinced that he was addressing the genuine Nick Carter, he said:

"We have tracked the trunk to the Pennsylvania depot in Jersey City."

"It went to the baggage-room, but no further, for on the night of its arrival the room was broken into by burglars, and several valises and this one trunk, the smallest there, were carried off."

"Is that all you have to communicate?" asked Nick, as the clerk paused.

"No. The police of Jersey City are of the opinion that the burglary was the work of the Hillside Gang, and they have strong hopes of running the burglars to earth."

Nick thanked the clerk for his information and left the office.

Outside he said to Chick:

"Reddy McGowan is the leader of that gang, and he has a woman in this very city."

"Suke the Lifter; I know her."

"Find her if you can, and see what you can do with her. But be at the office at six."

"All right."

Off went Chick without another word.

Across the street from the transfer office a bootblack was operating on the shoes of a man with reddish hair and whiskers while the conversation between the two detectives was going on.

He was handing a dime to the bootblack when Nick and Chick separated.

The former walked slowly in one direction, the latter at a brisk pace in another.

The man with the red whiskers looked from one to the other, and frowned.

Then, as if his mind had been suddenly made up to a certain course of action, he went down the street in the wake of Chick.

CHAPTER VII.

NIG AS A DETECTIVE.

On leaving his assistant, Nick Carter started to Long Island City to hunt up Nig and ascertain if the sharp-witted gamin had made any discoveries since their parting in the morning.

He had not proceeded half a block before he came plump upon Nig, who was sitting on the edge of the sidewalk behind a large dry goods box.

"I seen you comin' an' so I waited," said the boy, as he rose up, much to the great detective's surprise.

"But I am disguised, Nig. How could you know me?"

"Got onto der gait, fer one thing. But I knowed fer sure wen yer chinned wid der transfer clerk."

"Where were you then?"

"Outside by der door."

"Why didn't you wait there for me?"

"You was wid anudder chap, an' I didn't know if you wanted ter leave me 'round while you'n him was talkin'."

"Very discreet conduct, Nig; you're coming on."

"Tanks. But come on quick if you want ter catch der mug."

"Where is he?" asked the great detective, his face glowing with excitement.

"Down der street. I got my lamps on him. Come."

The little fellow who was disguised by a stiff-brimmed hat and a brand-new suit of clothes, so that his best friend would not have known him, started on a brisk trot in the direction Chick and the man with the red whiskers had taken.

"Dere he is. See him," pointing to the form of the latter personage, who was now walking slowly, in imitation of Chick's gait.

Nick's assistant had slackened his pace on catching sight of a rough-looking man on the other side of the street.

The great detective stopped, when within a hundred yards of his quarry, and, after saying hurriedly to his diminutive companion, "Keep your eye on him while I slip into this hallway a minute," quickly left the sidewalk.

Nig nodded his head and walked on.

He had not proceeded many yards before he was joined by a farmer-looking personage.

"Well, haow air yeou makin' it, my son?" said the latter to Nig, with a bucolic twang.

The boy looked up with a start.

"Who bees you?" he said, with a frown on his sharp face.

Nick Carter, for it was he, gave a low laugh.

"I fooled you that time, Nig," he said, in his natural voice.

The boy's face cleared instantly.

"Dat's der time you done der act in great shape," was his reply.

As they walked along, keeping at a discreet distance from the man with the red whiskers, Nig told his story.

"You told me to skip down ter Ravenswood and do two tings. Der fust was ter fine der vehicle wit' der wide tires an' der light gear."

"And did you succeed, Nig?"

"Dat's wot. I chased around der town for two hours an' den I run a-foul of der

on cart—it was a drivin' cart—back of an old Dutchman's barn. He'd never lent it by to any one, an' didn' know it ud been taken away."

"It must have been stolen in the night," said Nick, "and returned after it had been used to convey the bodies of the murdered men to the creek."

"De nex' job was ter pipe off ole Hanson's house, as you had a notion dat der mug you was after might come back dere a searchin' fer somethin' what he hadn't yet put his clam hooks on."

"Those were my instructions to the letter, Nig."

"Well, I went down dere, an' hid in der bushes near der front door."

"I'd bin a scrouchin' outer sight fer about an hour wen up der walk comes a mug wid red w'iskers—him ahead of us now; see?"

"I have my eyes on him," said the well pleased detective.

"He stops near de door an' I heard him mutterin' 'bout der bad luck he'd had in huntin' fer de ole crab's boodle."

"But he didn't go in der front, he went to der back, an' was in der house more'n a hour."

"I never stirred from der bushes but once, an' dat was to go out to der walk an' medger his tracks der way I seen you do down to der crik."

"Saw me?" exclaimed Nick, in surprise. "Why, I hadn't met you, then?"

"Who said yer had? But I was back of anudder tree dressin' myself after a swim w'en yer an' dat big dude frien' of yours came along."

"Why didn't you tell me of this before, Nig?"

"Forgot. 'Sides, it didn't amount ter nuffin'."

"Your observation of my actions certainly did, if your measurement of the footprints of the red-whiskered man coincides with the one I took."

"You kin put 'em together an' see."

Nig took out a dirty piece of paper from his pocket and handed it to the great detective.

Upon it was traced the outlines of a human foot.

Nick compared the work with the measurement he had taken at the creek.

"They were identical."

"W'en der mug came out of der house his face was black, an' he was cussin' like a pirate. I den knowed he'd made a place without havin' any trumps in his hand."

"I let him get outer de groun's, an' den I did der shadder act, an' I kep' on his trail till he got ter dis city an' a boot-black got a-hold o' him."

Nig paused, took the stump of a cigar from his pocket, put it in his mouth, and then began fishing in his clothes for a match.

Nick looked at the cigar stump with sudden interest.

"Where did you get that, Nig?" he asked.

"On der road from Ravenswood. Der mug trowed it away."

"Let me see it."

Nig handed it to him.

It was of the same brand as that of the stump which Nick had picked up in Hanson's grounds.

"Have you ever seen the man ahead of us before to-day?" Nick asked.

"Dat's wot," was the confident answer.

"Where?"

"At de crik der mornin' I got der letter ter take ter Ravenswood."

"Do you mean to say that he is the man who gave you the letter?"

"I knows he is."

"How do you know? By his voice?"

"Naw; der voice he used in ole Hanson's groun's dis monrin' was heavy and rough."

"By what, then? His nose?"

"Naw, he ain't got no Sheeny beak."

"Size?"

"Size is der same, an' somefin' else,

mister. He wore a dog's head shirt stud w'en he gimme der letter, an' he's a wearin' it now; an' he's got der same eyes—you can't fool me on der lamps."

"How about the nose and the voice?" queried Nick, after a pause, during which they had turned a corner.

"If der mug were an actor——"

"He has been on the stage, I am informed."

"Den der nose an' der voice could be faked; see?"

"Yes. That's the true explanation without doubt."

Nick was now within twenty steps of the man with the red whiskers, who was undoubtedly Edwin Luther, the murderer of Jacob Hanson and William Torrens.

He determined to arrest him at once.

The great detective whispered a few words to Nig and then advanced quickly toward his quarry.

At that moment Luther stopped.

He was in front of a saloon with open doors.

A wordy row was going on inside, and Nick supposed he had halted out of curiosity.

Nick was within a few feet of his man when something happened that played havoc with his plan.

A heavy beer glass, flung with murderous rage, came flying out of the saloon, and striking the great detective on the side of the head, sent him reeling back, half stunned, to the curbing.

Before he could recover himself, Luther had dashed into the saloon.

Luckily for Nick, the glass had not shattered when it collided with his head, otherwise he might have been a fit subject for the hospital.

He saw Luther enter the saloon, and staggered after him, but he was so faint and weak from the blow that he would have fallen when he crossed the threshold, if he had not caught the edge of the bar counter for support.

At his feet lay a man with his head covered with blood.

Nick was steadying himself for another movement forward, when the man arose.

It was the saloonkeeper.

The blood had come from his nostrils, and he was not otherwise injured.

A blow from some one's strong fist had knocked him down.

Without bestowing a single glance on the disguised detective, he started for the rear door.

Nick followed him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MURDERER MEETS HIS MATCH.

Chick had not been parted from Nick Carter more than five minutes when he espied a man across the street, whose appearance in Brooklyn at this time thrilled him with fierce satisfaction.

It was Reddy McGowan, the leader of the Hillside Gang of burglars, suspected by the police of Jersey City of having broken into the baggage-room at the Pennsylvania depot some ten days before and stolen a number of trunks, among them the one consigned by the Brooklyn lawyer to Vincent Orton at Princeton.

McGowan was slouching somewhat under the influence of liquor, and Chick kept his eye on him until he disappeared into a saloon, the one, in fact, in which the row, which resulted so unfortunately for Nick Carter, had occurred.

Chick knew the place, and he was also aware that it had been a regular resort for Suke the Lifter.

The woman had once deserted McGowan to consort with the keeper of the saloon, and Chick knew that the two were rank enemies.

Therefore, when Reddy McGowan entered the establishment of his former rival, the young detective scented trouble.

Chick was at the door—his disguise

that of a tough—as McGowan approached the bar.

"Gimme some whisky," the burglar said, in a surly voice, to the saloonkeeper, whose name was Durkin.

"Ye'll get no drink here, Reddy," said the other, with an ugly frown.

McGowan, who was anything but sober, as has been said, threw his hat on the floor and began to remove his coat.

Durkin, with a savage smile, came from behind the bar with a beer glass in his hand.

But he kept the hand behind his back until McGowan, his eyes flashing murderously, made a rush for him.

Then the glass was thrown.

It missed its mark and struck Nick Carter outside.

The next moment, Chick, whose mind had been suddenly made up as to the course he should pursue, sprang forward and struck Durkin a powerful blow on the nose.

Down dropped the saloonkeeper as though he had collided with a sledge hammer.

McGowan was regarding Chick in a bewildered manner when Young Hercules picked up the burglar's coat and hat and seized him by the arm.

"Come, Rocksey, let's slide out o' here afore the coppers make a dash for us."

McGowan, now more bewildered than ever, allowed Chick to hurry him out of the saloon by the back way.

They entered an alley, hurried down to a broad street, followed it up a few blocks, and then started up the stairway of a second-rate hotel.

Edwin Luther was not far behind them, but Chick, not being aware of his identity with the murderer of Hanson and Torrens, paid no attention to him.

Luther was in the act of leaving the sidewalk to ascend the stairs, when he heard a loud, excited voice down the street say:

"He went up thim stairs. Hurry up, man, or we'll lose him."

The speaker was Durkin, the saloonkeeper, who was walking behind Nick.

Looking upon the latter as a friend, since he had joined in the pursuit of Reddy McGowan, Durkin, upon the words, caught Nick's arm and pointed up the street.

The great detective felt like knocking the man down for his action, for the moment Durkin spoke, Edwin Luther turned with a start, saw the two men hurrying toward him, and then dashed up the stairs, three steps at a time.

The villain had made the discovery that morning that a trunk for Vincent Orton, which left Brooklyn the day of Jacob Hanson's disappearance, had been lost or stolen, from reading an advertisement in the *Eagle*.

The advertisement had been inserted at the instance of the transfer company, but the clerk, in his last conversation with Nick, had forgotten to mention this circumstance.

Luther put two and two together, and became half convinced that the trunk contained Hanson's money.

After reading the advertisement, he had called upon the manager of the transfer company, introduced himself as a Jersey City detective, and asked for certain particulars about the trunk.

The manager, suspecting nothing wrong, answered Luther's questions, and also furnished the gratuitous information that the matter was in the hands of the celebrated New York detective, Nick Carter, who was expected hourly.

This conversation took place in the manager's private office, and was not communicated to the clerk with whom Nick had had the interview the day before.

Leaving the manager, Luther went to Hanson's house to make a last search for the money—for it might be there after all, intending, if he failed to find it, to return to a point near the transfer office in Brooklyn, and wait for the appearance of Nick Carter.

Finding nothing at the house, he went back to Brooklyn, never suspecting that Nig was on his trail, and while his boots were being polished, saw Nick and Chick enter the office.

Not until they separated, and Chick began to walk fast, did he suspect who they were.

His judgment advised him to follow the man who was in a hurry, for something told him that the latter had got a clew to the whereabouts of the missing trunk.

When he bounded up the staircase of

the hotel, his heart was oppressed with the guilty fear that the two men down the street were officers, and that he was their quarry.

Arrived at the second story landing, he looked quickly about.

A few steps to his right was the little box-like office.

Beside it was a door which he rightly concluded opened into the baggage-room.

The proprietor or clerk was temporarily absent.

The steps of his pursuers were on the stairs below when he opened the door of the baggage room and jumped in.

As he closed the door after him, the eyes of a boy peered around the banisters at the top of the stairs.

It was Nig.

He had been in advance of Nick Carter and Durkin on leaving the saloon, but instead of following along the same sidewalk that Chick, McGowan and Luther had taken, he had crossed the street so as not to excite suspicion.

When the great detective and Durkin reached the head of the stairs, Nig pointed at the door of the baggage room and whispered excitedly:

"Der mug went in dere."

"And where did the other men go?" whispering back for the benefit of the saloonkeeper.

Nig had not seen them, but his ready wit caused him to point to the long corridor which traversed the second story from front to rear.

"Then you'd better go that way," whispered Nick to Durkin, "my man is the fellow with the red whiskers."

"All right, sor," responded the saloonkeeper, in a loud, bass voice.

Nick was relieved when Durkin went tramping down the corridor.

He now drew his pistol and approached the baggage room door.

It was not locked.

Opening it wide, the great detective was met with an unwelcome surprise.

There was no man there, and there was no chance for one to hide behind the half dozen valises and satchels resting snugly along the walls.

The open door communicating with the office explained how Luther had made his escape.

But he could not have gone far, and

must be either in the reading room or the office.

Nick went into the latter compartment.

A man with black hair and beard looked up from the ledger he had been examining with a stare of mild surprise.

"What do you want?" he asked, gruffly.

"I am looking for a man with red whiskers who must have passed through this office a few moments ago."

"You'll find him in the washroom that opens out of the reading room."

Nick, who had been looking steadily at the man's face, suddenly turned his head away and said:

"All right. Much obliged."

He had turned his head so that the man might not see the expression of his face.

For while gazing at the man he had made a surprising discovery.

That discovery appertained to an object on his shirt front.

The object was a dog's head stud.

Nick was an adept at masking his emotions, but the discovery was so unexpected that he felt that he would betray himself if he did not turn his face away.

As it was, he gave a slight start.

At that moment Durkin, the saloonkeeper, rushed up to the office window, and espying Nick, shook his fist at him and cried out in a voice hoarse with anger:

"Yer a liar, an' if ye'll coom out here I'll wipe der floor wid yer."

"What have I done?" asked the great detective, mildly, as he turned a composed face toward the window.

"Yez towld me—or yer brat of a son did, which amoants to the same thing, do ye moind—that Reddy McGowan wint out be the back way."

"And didn't he?"

"No, he didn't, fer the servant gurl—an' a foine crature she is, too—said they wint this way."

"Then I was mistaken. Perhaps they are in there"—pointing toward the reading room.

The Irishman, with the low muttered threat, "ef they ain't there I'll put a big head onto yez, me bye," went to the apartment indicated.

He had no sooner entered than Nig, who was waiting anxiously outside the office, followed after and closed the door

of the reading room which communicated with the office and turned the key in the lock.

This was an excellent move, for Edwin Luther could not now leave the office without passing through the baggage room, before the door of which stood the detective.

The villain had observed Nick's start, and guessed that his latest disguise had been penetrated.

His intention, when he had made the quick change in his personal appearance, was to pretend to his pursuers, should they come to the office, that he was the lodging-house proprietor, send them to the wash room on a false scent, and make his escape during their absence.

He could not imagine how he had been recognized, for the tell-tale stud never occurred to him.

Nick felt that the time to act had come when Nig locked the reading-room door.

On coming into the office he had thrust the hand which held the pistol into his bosom.

Out flashed the weapon while Luther's hands were down, and quick came the command:

"Up with your hands."

Instead of complying, Luther leaped from the high stool upon which he had been sitting, and flung himself upon his enemy, who was not more than three feet away.

The pistol cracked as he left his seat, and the bullet plowed a hole through the muscles of Luther's neck.

A desperate hand to hand struggle followed.

They were on the floor, rolling over and over, when Nig burst into the room, followed by Durkin.

The latter had been hurriedly posted by the boy as to the situation, and he was now eager to assist in capturing a murderer.

Flinging himself upon the combatants, he immediately became a hindrance and not a help to the cause of justice, for Luther managed to free himself from Nick's grasp, and the next instant would have plunged a knife into the detective's heart had not Nig taken a hand.

As Luther raised himself on an elbow and drew the knife, Nig, standing behind, gave him such a kick on the back

of the hand that he uttered a howl of pain, and dropped the knife.

As he turned to see whence this new attack had come, Nig let his foot caroom on Luther's jaw, and almost at the same moment Nick Carter, who had flung the well-meaning but blundering Durkin into a corner, caught Luther by the shoulder, jerked him backward on the floor and planted his knees on the villain's breast.

When Nig saw Luther lying on the flat of his back, and Nick holding him down, he plumped himself with all his might on the villain's head and nearly dislocated the latter's neck in the operation.

Luther was insensible while the handcuffs were being placed upon his wrists, but he revived in a few moments.

That night he occupied a cell in the Brooklyn jail, and the next morning that city and New York were ringing with Nick Carter's great achievement.

Two hours after the capture Chick appeared before Nick in the office of Brooklyn's chief of police.

His smiling face told the story of his success.

"I've got the trunk," he said.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GAPS ARE FILLED.

Chick's story, briefly given, is as follows:

He had escaped with Reddy McGowan from the lodging house, and afterward so skillfully worked his points with the half-drunken burglar that the latter became convinced that the young detective was a member of the crooked fraternity. So believing and feeling under obligations to Chick for his assistance, he took him to a house in an evil quarter of the city, where his mistress, Suke the Lifter, was staying.

Suke was found in her room, dead drunk.

Chick gave McGowan some money and told him to go out and buy some beer for the crowd.

The burglar consented, and while he was gone the young detective made an investigation of the room, and in a closet

found a number of valises and also the small trunk he was in search of.

Bursting open the lock, he made a hurried examination of its contents.

Everything was in order, which caused him to believe that it had not yet been overhauled.

Among other things he found a package of banknotes and securities, and a large, bulky envelope addressed to Vincent Orton.

When McGowan returned Chick placed him under arrest.

The next day in Nick's office Vincent Orton read the statement found in the bulky envelope.

It completely cleared up the mystery surrounding the old man's actions, and the relationship that existed between him and Edwin Luther.

Written a week before Hanson's disappearance, it ran in this wise:

"The confession I am about to make may shock you, but I am compelled to undertake it in view of the unnatural conduct of one Edwin Luther. He has repeatedly threatened my life, and if I should be murdered, this confession may serve a useful purpose by revealing the identity of the murderer.

"Edwin Luther is the son of a woman who once bore my name. It was a secret marriage, contracted while I was on a visit to Boston. I met her at the house of a friend where she officiated as house-keeper.

"She was an Englishwoman and personally very attractive. Her only child, by a former marriage, was Edwin Luther, who was then an actor in England.

"It was not until a month after my union with the woman, and when I was about to reveal the secret to you and Cuthbert, that the shameful depths of her character were revealed to me.

"One evening, when I was supposed to be in Malden, I came home and found her in the midst of a drunken orgie, her companion being a notorious gambler.

"Instead of exhibiting shame or consternation at my appearance, she laughed in my face, said I was an old fool, and that she had married me for my money, and wound up by declaring that unless I paid her well, she would disgrace me publicly. When she uttered those words

she knew she was assailing my weakest point.

"Well, I agreed to give her ten thousand dollars and settle an annuity of one thousand on her while she lived.

"We separated next day, and I returned to Ravenswood.

"For five years I paid the annuity into the hands of her son, whom I supposed to be her legitimate agent; but shortly after I had made the fifth payment to him I learned through a reliable source that my wife was dead, and not only that, but also that the event had occurred within six months after our separation.

"When Luther appeared to demand the sixth payment, I told him what I had discovered, and ordered him to leave the house and never show his face in it again.

"He answered me with a flood of profanity, and said I was his pigeon and that he would pluck me to the last feather.

"That was two years ago. For a year I never heard from him, but during the last twelve months I have been sorely persecuted by him. He has threatened to kill me, has held over my head a lying statement he had prepared in regard to my relations with his disreputable mother, and which he said would go into the hands of the printer whenever I failed to comply with his demands.

"I confess to my shame that I have paid him many hundreds of dollars during the past year; but I finally resolved to defy him, and at his last visit, a few days ago, I told him that he should never again receive another cent of my money, and that if he killed me, my right hand should be the means of sending him to the gallows. He failed to understand me, and left the house with the threat that I had not seen the last of him. I am afraid he intends to murder me, but if he should carry out his purpose, I hope that my threat may come true, and that these words, penned by my right hand, may send him to the gallows. I could inform the police, and have him bound over to keep the peace, but such a proceeding, I am convinced, would not deter that desperate and conscienceless scoundrel from carrying out his revengeful purpose.

"Such a course, however, would be most repugnant to my feelings, for I would rather brave the consequences of a refusal to take it, than have the story of

my marriage, with all its disgusting details, published to the world.

"That is all. In the trunk, among other papers, you will find my will. God bless you and Cuthbert, and may you never know the suffering that has afflicted the last years of my life.

"JACOB HANSON."

An olographic will was indeed found among the other papers.

By its terms all of the testator's property was left to Vincent and Cuthbert Orton, share and share alike.

The notes and securities amounted to over five hundred thousand dollars.

Edwin Luther, when confronted with the evidence of his guilt, made a full confession.

He had lured Hanson to Ab Farley's in order that he might search the old man's house, and he had induced William Torrens to go to the same place, as he suspected that the man-of-all-work knew Hanson's secret.

Asked about Torrens' knowledge of Malcom, the Park Row cigar maker, he said that he had lost one of Malcom's notes, inviting him to spend the night at the latter's house, which Torrens probably found.

The double murder was consummated after Hanson and Torrens had been prisoners for some days in Farley's cellar.

Failing to find the old man's money, or to induce his victim to disclose its hiding-place, Luther had strangled him, and immediately thereafter had murdered Torrens in the same way.

In regard to the severed hand, Luther said that when he announced to Hanson in Farley's cellar his intention to kill him then and there, the old man repeated what he had once before said about the terrible power his right hand would exercise after he was dead.

"I killed him," said the murderer, coolly, "and a few hours afterward I cut off the hand that was going to raise hob with me, and to show my contempt for its power, I nailed it over the door of the old man's summer house."

Luther's confession was made in the evening.

The next morning he was found dead in his cell.

He had poisoned himself.

At his feet lay the dog's head shirt stud.

Examination showed that it was hollow.

In the hollow place were a few grains of a deadly Indian poison.

But little more remains to be told.

Ab Farley, Luther's accomplice, was never captured, but a few months after the events recorded in this story, he was cut to pieces by Dahomeyan savages, while he was acting as scout and spy for General Dodds.

Nigel Burke, the boy detective, is now attending school in Brooklyn, and has a handsome account in bank.

Vincent and Cuthbert Orton had remembered him in a practical manner.

And they did not forget Nick and Chick.

[THE END.]

The next number of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY will contain "Burglar Joe; or, Nick Carter's Leap in the Dark."

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